

Beauty and the Beast: The Father's Unconscious and the Riddle of Femininity

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SUMMARY. This paper is about the importance of the father-daughter relationship in the development of femininity. It is the author's opinion that recent accounts of femininity have concentrated, in contrast to Freud, almost exclusively on the mother-daughter relationship thus ignoring the father and, most importantly, the father's unconscious masculinity and its influence on the development of femininity. The nature and development of masculinity and its relation to femininity are explored and the implications of these for the father-daughter relationship and for the development of the girl's sexual identity are examined. Phantasies, fears and anxieties about both masculinity and femininity, the collusion that develops between father and daughter, and the possible solutions and attempts at compromise that the girl develops are explored.

In his paper 'Femininity' Freud (1932) writes:

Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity ... Nor will *you* have escaped worrying over this problem - those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply - you are yourselves the problem.

The fact that femininity is viewed as more of a problem than masculinity is a problem in itself that can only be elucidated by the realisation that femininity has been *defined* as the problem. When femininity is defined as the problem the complementarity between masculinity and femininity, and the fact that each is defined in terms of the other, is lost and the active role of the father in feminine development is obscured. This paper is about the role of the father, or more specifically of the father's unconscious, on feminine development.

The recent comeback of the father in psychoanalytic theory highlights his prolonged absence from the scene. After he had been made the main actor in the Freudian family drama, the central figure in the development of gender identity and the cornerstone of civilisation process, both as an ideal and as a tyrant, he subsequently disappeared from the scene almost without a trace. Reference to him in Object Relation theories has been as a supportive figure in a drama where the main protagonist, the main hero and the

main villain has been the mother. Recent theories of female development have not been an exception. Innumerable books have been written on the mother-daughter

relationship and its decisive influence on women's development. Chodorow's classic account of the reproduction of mothering (Chodorow 1978) as well as Eichenbaum and Orbach's books on feminine development (Eichenbaum & Orbach 1982,1983) are examples of this approach.

Both Chodorow and Eichenbaum and Orbach have concentrated on the motherdaughter relationship which they see as crucial to the development of feminine

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identity. For Chodorow the intense identification between mother and daughter due to the fact that they are of the same sex makes eventual separation from mother a very difficult, if not an impossible, task. Chodorow argues that the girl never completely separates from mother, a fact which accounts for women's blurred boundaries as well as for their capacity for empathy and for relating. But if so it is a false empathy and a compulsive relatedness based on projective identification.

Eichenbaum and Orbach also concentrate on the mother-daughter pre-oedipal relationship and on the incomplete separation from the mother but with the emphasis on mother's psychology and how this is transmitted to the girl through mother's identification with her daughter. Mother's psychology includes the debased and powerless image of woman within patriarchal culture as well as the split-off needy little girl.

More recently Nini Herman (1989) explored the issue of separation between mother and daughter and the guilt of contemporary woman or attempting such separation. Halberstadt-Freud in a recent paper (Halberstadt-Freud 1989) has also explored the girl's incomplete separation from mother and the consequences of this on object choice and sexual development.

In the above accounts the emphasis is on the mother-daughter dyad and the incomplete separation between them. In these and similar accounts the role of the father is treated as secondary. I think that these accounts, extremely valuable as they have been in throwing new light on the mother-daughter relationship, do not nevertheless differentiate enough between ego development and sexual identity. This differentiation is an important, albeit a difficult one to make because sexuality is necessarily part of the whole person. It is important because it helps us distinguish between the different strata of the female psyche - what belongs to mother and what belongs to father. I believe that woman's basic ego structure, what Kohut has called the 'basic fabric of the ego', develops in relation to mother, while her sexual identity and her sexuality, on the other hand, develop in relation to father. We cannot therefore talk about the development of femininity by excluding the father. (The concept of femininity, ill-defined as it is, seems to include both the female psychic structure, and hence the issue of separation, boundaries and identification, and the female sexual identity).

In all theories that stress the mother-daughter relationship the identification with mother is taken for granted. And yet no identification - as opposed to symbiosis and to projective identification - can take place without a third actor present. This third actor is the real 'other' from whom the self together with its identificatory figure will differentiate. In this sense no real identification with mother can take place and no development of a sexual identity, without the presence - real or phantasied - of a father.

In this paper I shall concentrate on the father-daughter relationship and the father's influence on the girl's developing sexual identity and sexuality. The father, by being the third actor in the family drama and by denoting the contra-sexual for the girl, will be necessarily seen by her as the complementary opposite - as that which she is not. Her sexual identity will thus develop according to this perception by positioning herself in relation to him as to an opposite. In this sense the father's psychology and his unconscious and conscious feelings and phantasies are of utmost importance.

This is different from Jung's notion of masculinity and femininity as opposites. No archetypal view of masculinity and femininity is assumed here but rather a search by

the developing girl and boy for the *meaning* of sex difference and for positioning themselves on the masculine/feminine axis. In this search oedipal relationships and unconscious communication play a paramount role. If opposites - as Plato has already said 2500 years ago - define each other and if masculinity and femininity are perceived as opposites then the father's role in defining the contra-sexual for the girl is crucial.

Opposites are in themselves conceptual constructs. The anatomical difference need not lead to a construction of a pair of opposites but it is obvious that in our culture it has. Once again we are concerned here with the meaning of the anatomical difference and with the whole world of fantasies it leads to.

Now the idealisation of the father by the girl is one of the main characteristics of the father-daughter relationship. Freud explains the idealisation of the father by the fact that the girl's first relationship with mother is full of frustration and conflict. The girl turns away from mother whom she sees as castrated towards the father whom she sees as the powerful possessor of the desired penis, and in doing so she devalues mother and idealises father. Other authors namely Melanie Klein, Ernest Jones and Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel agree that the girl's first object is frustrating and in turning away from it the girl is bound to idealise the second object (Chasseguet-Smirgel 1964). In this model the split is between first and second object, between mother and father as ultimately representing the bad and the idealised object.

Now idealisation, as Klein has shown, is a corollary to persecution and a defence against it, and where there is excessive idealisation there is also persecutory anxiety. Again in the Freudian model the persecutory anxiety is assumed to belong to the first object and idealisation to the second. It is my argument in this paper that the father is also perceived, at some level, as persecutory and that the idealisation of the father by the daughter is a defence against the father as a persecutor. I would also suggest that the fear of persecution by the father that the daughter carries in herself is not just a phantasy resulting from her oedipal desire, as Freud would say, but a more or less accurate perception of the father's unconscious. The father's unconscious masculine identity, how it comes into being and how it influences the daughter's emerging feminine identity form the main subject of this paper.

Lemoine-Luccione (1976) has remarked that 'men and women are the fantasy of each other'. My question here is what happens when phantasy and phantasy interact and what are the dynamics that govern the phantasy of the daughter and the phantasy of the father? As Freud, and psychoanalysis in general, has concentrated mainly on the child's phantasies of his/her parents the question has not been asked. What is more, Freud assumed that repressed phantasies cannot be directly communicated. Except for a passage from his paper 'On the unconscious' where Freud (1915) remarks 'it is remarkable how the unconscious of one person can act upon the unconscious of the other without passing through the system Cs' (p. 198), Freud was not concerned with this problem. It took several decades after Freud for Robert Langs to concentrate exactly on this phenomenon i.e. how the unconscious of one person, the patient in this case, can accurately perceive the unconscious of another, the therapist. It also took several decades for another analyst, Alice Miller, to point out how the idealisation of the father prevented Freud from examining the father as a real person and not just as a phantasy in the child's mind.

Now let me conic hark to my original suggestion that (a) the idealisation of the father is a defence not against the mother as a persecutory figure but against the father as a persecutor, and (b) that this feat of persecution by the father is not just a phantasy in

the girl's mind but a more or less accurate perception of the father's phantasies i.e. his unconscious. (That mother is also a persecutor, indeed the first persecutory figure, is not denied here. What I would like to concentrate on, however, is father as a persecutor.)

Karl Figlio (1984) has remarked in a recent paper that Jung offered no father archetype. I think that Freud, on the other hand, comes very close to postulating one when in 'Group psychology and the analysis of the ego' (1921) he talks about the father imago which is often reactivated and which consists of the image of a 'paramount and dangerous personality, towards whom only a passive-masochistic attitude is possible, to whom one's will has to be surrendered' (p. 160). Freud talks here about what he has named the 'archaic heritage' and refers to his 'scientific myth' of the Totem and Taboo. He is, therefore, predominantly talking about the phantasies of the boy. Nevertheless I think the assumption here is that there is a phantasy of a persecutory figure and this phantasy is based, somehow, on real events albeit removed to prehistoric times. As a metaphor this could be understood as the Freudian unconscious, the id, and more specifically the masculine unconscious, for I believe that in describing the id Freud had in mind the masculine unconscious. I shall attempt to describe how in my view the masculine unconscious comes into being and how this bears on the relationship between father and daughter. First I shall give a few examples to illustrate women's and men's phantasies around masculinity.

The first example relates to Bluebeard, whom Bettelheim calls 'the most monstrous and beastly of all fairy tale husbands' (Bettelheim 1975). I think he is the most monstrous and beastly because he corresponds to women's and men's most horrific phantasies about masculinity. The story opens with Bluebeard leading his new wife, Judith, to his castle. He tells her that she can wander freely through the castle with the exception of the one forbidden room which she is not allowed to open. She promises not to open it but when Bluebeard pretends to go for a trip the new bride overcome by temptation opens the forbidden room and finds all Bluebeard's previous wives who had dared to disobey his orders, dead in it. Now it is her turn to join the other wives in this room of horrors and Bluebeard's horrific and lonely figure wanders once again alone through the horrible castle.

The room that Judith is not supposed to open is Bluebeard's masculine unconscious. It contains all the women in his life who dared to disobey his orders. Bettelheim interprets the opening of the forbidden door as sexual infidelity. If this is so then the sexual domination of woman becomes the cornerstone of masculine phantasies. On the other hand the room full of dead women implies man's split off and denied femininity. The story also implies man's infantile yearning for the perfect woman, the perfect mother who will never let him down, the mother he can trust and dominate at the same time.

My second example is from a contemporary novel, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984). In this novel Tomas, a brain surgeon and eternal womaniser, meets Tereza, an infinitely faithful, docile and submissive woman and falls in love with her. The opposites thus united - each one acting as the other's mirror of the repressed self - lead to a life fraught with unhappiness and unsatisfied love. The novel is much more complex than this and it is impossible to do justice here to its multilayered complexity. What I would like to concentrate on here is Tomas's - man's - way of using sex as a way of denying his vulnerability and his dependence on woman, and secondly, Tereza's, or woman's, unconscious perception of Tomas as manifested in a

dream Tereza had. In this dream Tereza sees herself naked in a swimming pool together with other naked women. They are supposed to walk naked around the swimming pool and sing and perform for Tomas who is sitting comfortably enjoying the spectacle. If one of the women stops singing she is immediately shot dead and her body falls into the swimming pool which is full of blood and dead women. Tereza feels exhausted and humiliated and wants to stop singing and performing, but she is terrified and has to go on and on knowing that at some point she will collapse out of sheer exhaustion and that will be her end.

I believe that this terrifying image of a male tyrant as portrayed in *Bluebeard*, in Tereza's dream and in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* is part of the phantasies about masculinity that both men and women have. It is, in other words, part of the masculine unconscious for both men and women.

I shall attempt now to sketch how masculinity first develops out of the relationship of the boy to the mother and as a reaction to her powerful and omnipotent figure.

Let us try and follow the boy's way of reacting to the mother. The mother is for the child the source, on the one hand, of feelings of deep love and security and, on the other, of feelings of envy, hatred and frustration. In either case the mother is perceived as omnipotent, giving and withholding as she wishes. The reaction against the omnipotent mother lies at the heart of masculine identity. The helplessness and powerlessness of the child's love and hate is too much for the immature ego to bear. The boy will oppose mother with his penis which he will then overvalue while at the same time he will devalue the mother as powerless and castrated, as belonging to that part of humanity deemed to be inferior because of the lack of this powerful appendage. At the same time he will deny that part of himself which has identified with mother, his first, vulnerable self, and will experience himself as omnipotent. Chasseguet-Smirgel (1964) has pointed out that the Freudian image of the castrated mother is a defence against the omnipotent mother. I would add to this that the Freudian image of the penis as a superior organ is also a defence against the omnipotent mother and against the child's own helplessness. Thus in this first and extreme infantile form masculinity equals omnipotence. (This secondary omnipotence is a defence against powerlessness and is different from what Winnicott called omnipotence at the stage of absolute dependence.)

Klein refers to the 'sadistic omnipotence of the penis' and goes on to talk about the boy at this stage: '... his penis and his sense of omnipotence become linked together in a way which is of fundamental importance for the man's activity and his master of anxiety' (Klein 1932, p. 243). And again: 'the specific mechanism he employs for overcoming his fear both of internal and external dangers, at the same time as he obtains sexual satisfaction, is determined by the fact that his penis, as an active organ, is used to master his object . . .' (p. 243).

According to Klein, however, the attack is not on the mother but on the penis inside the mother. I take this to mean (although not Klein) an attack on the phallic i.e. omnipotent mother, an argument supported by Chasseguet-Smirgel (1964).

Klein repeatedly refers to the sadistic and destructive properties of the penis at this stage and this seems to support my argument that the boy's fantasy of omnipotence and domination over his mother is through his penis.

So the boy opposes and seeks to dominate mother with his penis and phantasises a triumph over her and at this very moment masculine identity comes into being. In this sense masculinity means the sexual domination of woman-mother in an attempt to

ensure she will always be available so that man can go on denying his vulnerability. It also means that man will be able to deny love and vulnerability through sex. This replacement of love by sex is another characteristic of primitive masculinity.

But the boy's overvaluation of the penis has another, more profound and powerful reason. Klein describes the stage that precedes the boy's rebellion against the mother as the boy's 'feminine phase', in which there is rivalry with mother and envy of her and is characterised by feelings of inferiority. More recently Stoller (1968) has maintained that the boy's first identification with mother has to be repressed if the boy is to develop a masculine identity. Freud has also maintained that the 'repudiation of femininity' forms the bedrock of masculinity which I take to refer to the same fact. In this sense femininity equals castration. In Klein's language: 'in the deepest layers of his mind, therefore, it is always by the "bad" father's penis belonging to his mother that he expects to be castrated'. This very fact that femininity equals castration in the unconscious mind of the boy and that the denial of femininity forms the cornerstone of masculinity has far-reaching implications for the character structure of man and for any relation between man and woman including that between father and daughter.

Thus the boy's overvaluation of his penis signifies the strength of his resistance to be drawn into the vortex of regression that would lead to his original identification with mother and to his original femininity. In this sense masculinity develops in an endless struggle against mother and against original femininity with all its traps from outside and inside.

In *The Odyssey* Homer paints in vivid colours and unforgettable images the endless struggle of man against woman and her engulfing presence. From the moment when Odysseus escapes from the Cyclops, this formidable part object, he encounters woman in all her phantasied power. In Antiphates' wife he encounters the man-eater woman. In Circe he encounters the seductress who enjoys trapping and humiliating men; in the Sirens and the Scylla and Charybdis he faces formidable engulfing feminine forces, while Calypso, a more benevolent and gentle goddess, is still dangerous because she seeks to keep Odysseus on her island for ever and prevent him from reaching Ithaca and regain his kingdom. It is remarkable that all the forces of regression in Odysseus' travels are represented by women or female forces which he will have to defeat, overcome or outwit in order to reach Ithaca and thus fulfill his masculine destiny.

The *Odyssey* portrays the struggle of man to establish his masculinity in a continuous struggle against woman, but at the same time it portrays the humanisation of masculinity through woman. One should not forget that the *Odyssey* follows the *Iliad*, a poetic portrayal of one of the most savage wars of antiquity - the siege and capture of Troy where primitive masculinity runs rampant. It is also significant that Odysseus begins his story with the capture of the city of the Cicones - which sounds like a miniature of the more savage capture and sacking of Troy:

'I sacked the place' Odysseus tells with pride, 'and destroyed the men who held it. The wives and the rich plunder that we took from the town we divided so that no one, as far as I could

help it, should go short of his share.' (p. 140)

Two things are striking here: (a) the pride that Odysseus takes in relating the atrocities of war, and (b) the lumping together of 'wives and plunder' so that one gets the impression that in both cases he is talking about material goods. I think that both these things i.e. the pride in winning a war and destroying a city and the objectification of woman are basic characteristics of primitive masculinity. In Homer's heroic times they

were still part of a conscious masculine identity and were exhibited with pride. Through the ages, however, this part of masculine identity has been repressed and with the development of the superego it became largely unacceptable to consciousness, but these characteristics are still at the base of unconscious masculinity. They are basic because they come into being during the boy's struggle against the mother and his phantasied victory which constitutes, as I have argued, the base of masculine identity. This phantasied victory entails the sexual domination of woman and the denial of his dependence on her. By turning woman into an object which he can control and manipulate man alleviates his anxiety about her power. This kind of primitive masculinity is exemplified for instance by pornography today where sex, power and misogyny intermingle to deny man's fear and dependence on woman through her objectification.

This type of primitive masculinity is masterfully portrayed in Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. Don Giovanni, the eternal Don Juan, wanders from town to town and from city to city seducing and abandoning woman after woman. To sleep with the same woman twice means for Don Giovanni to ignore all the other women and all the pleasures he can get from them, which he cannot bring himself to do. Don Giovanni, the eternal seducer, substitutes sex for love and endless promiscuity for the vulnerability and the dangers of a relationship. The seducer expresses primitive masculinity in that he denies not only vulnerability but the existence of the superego - the presence of the father - and thus the possibility of a mature masculine identity. In fact the crucial moment in the opera is when Don Giovanni kills Donna Anna's father who comes to defend his daughter's honour. It is a crucial moment for it stands metaphorically for Don Giovanni's killing of the father in himself. Don Giovanni is the man without a father and like Oedipus he is destined for damnation. But whereas Oedipus suffers from mistaken identity, of not knowing who he is, Don Giovanni suffers from the delusion that he is above the Father. He represents primitive masculinity - the phantasy of omnipotence. This difference between these two tragic heroes can probably account for the different ends they suffer: Oedipus finds salvation in Colonus. For Don Giovanni only eternal damnation is possible.

In the final act of the opera the confrontation between Don Giovanni and the dead father's ghost highlights Don Giovanni's illusion of omnipotence. Don Giovanni dares to provoke the powers of the underworld - the supreme authority of the Father. His phantasied omnipotence robs him of any realistic fear and leads him, eventually, to his damnation. I think that Don Giovanni and the father's ghost stand for the split in man between father and primitive masculinity (in Freud's terminology between the superego and the id). In this sense Father and primitive masculinity are opposites which cannot be experienced together and, in normal development, form the two poles of man's character structure.

To summarise, masculine development goes through a phase of aggressive, rapacious masculinity that corresponds to the boy's revolt against mother's power and his phantasied victory over her. Characteristics of this phase are the illusion of omnipotence and the domination of woman through objectification. This kind of primitive masculinity is eventually repressed as the internalisation of the idealised father and his law take place and makes omnipotence untenable. The internalisation of the father has, of course, another more benign effect in that it points to the possibility of a non-reactive masculine identity, a masculine identity that is not based on the repudiation of femininity with all its misogynist implications. But both the illusion of

omnipotence and the objectification of woman remain part of masculine identity in various degrees of repression depending (a) on the culture i.e. to what extent aggressive masculinity is acceptable or even encouraged by the wider society and (b) on the degree to which the idealised father has been internalised.

Now given that part of masculine identity, in however repressed a form, is the objectification and sexual domination of woman how will this bear on the fatherdaughter relationship? How will the father's phantasies about woman and his phantasies about masculinity and femininity affect her? In other words what will the effect of the father's unconscious be on the developing daughter? Here we should not forget that the father's unconscious contains the other pole of masculine identity, the dread of woman and her power.

This question, as far as I know, has never been posed in such a form and I think the reason is, partly, the taboo that forbids us to put father and primitive masculinity within the same bracket. It is as if the split between the idealised father and primitive masculinity is so successful and the idealisation of the father so absolute that we can go on pretending that when a man becomes father he gives up, in his unconscious, his primitive masculine side.

This split in man and how it is perceived and maintained by his daughter is beautifully portrayed in the fairy tale of the Beauty and the Beast (Perrault 1970). In this story a rich merchant has three daughters, the youngest one being Beauty whom he loves most. When the merchant sets off for his trips he asks his daughters what they would like him to bring them. The older daughters ask for beautiful clothes, but Beauty asks just for a red rose. On his way back from his business trip the merchant loses his way in a dark wood and exhausted and hungry he arrives at a mysterious castle. There he finds the table laid for him and dines alone. He then finds a bed ready for him and exhausted he goes to sleep. Next day his strength restored he sets out for home but as he is about to leave the grounds of this mysterious place he remembers Beauty's request and cuts a red rose from a rose tree. At that very moment the Beast appears and says to the merchant that he has cut his favourite rose and has abused his hospitality and should, therefore, die. The merchant pleads with him and is finally allowed to go home under the condition that he will send his daughter to stay with the Beast, otherwise he will have to die. The merchant accepts and goes home having in mind not to keep his promise. But when Beauty hears about it she insists on going to stay with the Beast and save her father's life.

Beauty stays at the castle for a long time as the Beast's guest. The Beast dines with her every evening and is kind and courteous to her but every evening he repeats his request to marry her. Beauty always refuses feeling disgusted by the Beast and the situation remains the same for a long time until one day Beauty's father falls ill and Beauty gets permission from the Beast to go and visit him. Beauty stays with her father for longer than she had promised the Beast and the Beast sends her message that unless she goes back to him he will die of broken heart. Beauty driven by pity and some kind of love for the Beast goes back and accepts to become his wife, at which point, of course, the Beast turns into a beautiful prince.

The story portrays vividly the split in the father into an idealised father figure and a Beast, and how this split is repeated in the daughter's perception of him. Beauty, in order to keep her idealised father alive, has to split him off and keep him separated from the Beast. It is important to realise here that the Beast is not just a phantasy in Beauty's mind, as Bettelheim suggests, but a real split within the father. That this is so

is revealed by the fact that it is the father who first brings the Beast into being. It is the father who gets lost in the dark wood, who descends into that dark side of himself to find the mysterious castle where the Beast resides. The Beast can be helpful, nurturing, energising, healing and restoring the depleted self to its wholeness. But faced with the father's wish to comply to the daughter's desire the Beast becomes devouring. At that moment primitive masculinity takes hold of the father and the split is now revealed to Beauty. Beauty can now be either with the Beast or with father but not with both of them at the same time. She can now go on worshipping the father's idealised image from a distance while she lives with the Beast.

It is also important to realise that the healing of the split comes about by the lessening of both idealisation and persecution i.e. by the father being ill and the Beast dying of a broken heart. At that moment Beauty realises the vulnerability in both the father and the Beast and perceives the humanness in both. The extremes of idealisation and persecution collapse. Beauty is now ready to love a man by seeing the vulnerability of the Beast. And the Beast can turn into a man only through Beauty's love and through giving up his own beastly power.

The humanisation of the beast through a woman's love is a common theme in fairy tales and myths. Bettelheim interprets it as a phantasy in woman of sex as something revolting. I think there is something more than that in these stories. They also refer to the phantasy both within man and woman of a beast within man. This phantasy relates to masculine infantile wishes of sexual domination and objectification of woman as well as to the boy's sadistic attacks on mother-woman, and to the working through of these infantile phantasies through an adult relationship.

And so we are back to our original question: what is the influence of the father, or more specifically, of the father's unconscious on the development of feminine sexual identity? As I have already argued the girl's perception of the father's unconscious primitive masculinity will give rise to persecutory anxiety, especially as her feelings of love grow more intense, and this will lead to idealisation as a defence against persecutory anxiety. This idealisation of the father by the girl basically means submission to him. As the girl learns to position herself on the masculine-feminine divide she absorbs, at the same time, the unconscious power relationship between masculinity and femininity. However much this can be negated within the actual relation to father which can serve as reality testing and as a way to allay and work through anxieties about masculinity, this unconscious phantasy will remain in woman and will be activated in her sexual relationships to men, in her undervaluation of sexuality and overvaluation of romantic love, in the frequency of frigidity or partial frigidity in women, in persecutory fear of unknown men and the idealisation of man and the masculine in general.

The paradox here is that the father-daughter relationship has two contradictory effects on the developing girl. It will, on the one hand, fill the girl with persecutory anxiety and will, on the other hand, allay this anxiety through reality testing. If the father relates to daughter in an 'optimally erotic' way, to borrow a term from a recent paper on the father by Andrew Samuels (1988), the girl's fears and anxieties about the dark beast of masculinity will be to a great extent worked through.

I think this positive 'optimally erotic' relation between father and daughter is necessary for healthy female development because it heals the split between the idealised father and the beast and it proves to the girl that reality is stronger than, and not to be confused with, phantasy. If this 'optimally erotic' relation is absent, then

reality and phantasy get confused in the girl's mind and the transformation of father into beast can threaten to take place any moment. This is the case when father relates to his daughter in one of the two extremes of either abusing her or being a remote, inscrutable or absent figure.

Louise had such a remote, inscrutable father. When Louise tries to speak about her father she does not know what to say. He was there, somewhere, in the background, an obscure, shadowy and remote figure who would punish her occasionally and sometimes buy her sweets. She does not remember him ever sitting her on his lap or giving her a cuddle. When Louise was twelve her mother left father for another man taking Louise with her and when Louise was thirteen the step-father's brother started sexually abusing Louise. Louise was drawn to him originally as to a father figure, a father who was kind and understanding, who gave her his time and attention and made her feel good about herself. When he started coming to her room at night she felt terrified and frozen, unable to do or say anything. The abuse went on for a year before she was able to say anything, significantly not to her mother, but to her aunt about it.

In this man Louise experienced the transformation of father into beast in a way that verified her most horrific phantasies stemming from a remote father. In her adult sexual relationships the transformation can take place any moment. After an initial few months of 'being in love' when sex is good and the beast becomes the prince, the transformation back to beast becomes more frequent and unpredictable. Even in her present relationship which is good and constructive sex is often experienced as an assault and she is the victim. The complaint of many women that after an initial honeymoon they 'go off' sex refers, I think, to this transformation of the prince into beast - the replacement of the good penis by the bad one - which seems to have much stronger hold on the phantasy of these women.

But there is yet another, more subtle, dimension. The girl by sensing the beast within man makes yet another more secret discovery: that there is another level below the beast and that what the beast is guarding is the entrance to this forbidden subterranean chamber. Below the beast lie castration and femininity and man's dread of it. The power relationship between masculinity and femininity is felt as a necessary safeguard against the unthinkable anxiety of infinite regression. And now a collusion develops between father and daughter and between man and woman in order to allay father's anxiety about woman's, ultimately mother's, power. For the girl, sensing father's archaic fear of woman and femininity, will make sure she becomes his little girl, cute, flirtatious, non-threatening. It is as if the girl, wanting above all to be loved, gives up all her aggressive, active self in exchange for love. Since her identification with mother will entail the split of an all-powerful-powerless image of woman she will have to go on allaying father's fears of an all-powerful femininity which has to be kept under control. This phantasy of a *necessary* power relation between masculinity and femininity is one of the reasons, I think, why women find it very difficult to be in a position of authority and, at the same time, feel feminine. Women often feel as if one of these two things has to be given up.

There are, of course, infinite variations of this pure type of femininity depending on the type of the father-daughter relationship and the oedipal triangle. For instance the girl might identify with the father either to the extent that her object-choice will be a homosexual one or by making a partial identification based on certain other characteristics.

This father identification, however, will not release the girl from her unconscious

equation of femininity with submission based on her perception of primitive unconscious masculinity. On the contrary the identification with father is usually a defence against this unconscious equation. It is as if the girl is saying: if that's what femininity is I don't want to be feminine. Things can become much more complex if the identification is with a father who is experienced as not masculine. Marie is such a woman.

Marie's father was a passive, quiet man manipulated by his controlling and very insecure wife and by his brother who lived next door. The brother was a brutal, aggressive man who terrorised Marie as a child and who humiliated father again and again by imposing his will. The father invariably gave in to him, which was experienced by Marie as a terrible humiliation of her father. For Marie the uncle represented masculinity: that was how men were. The father belonged to some kind of intermediary category, a kind of confusing no man's land. But I think that the confusion goes much deeper and it is, in fact, the father's confusion that Marie expresses. The father, like Marie, seemed to be saying: masculinity is a violent, un-named something. It was as if the father afraid of his repressed, primitive masculinity took flight into a passive, conciliatory attitude. Marie identified with a non-masculine father. This position is fraught with difficulties and has led to a curious mixture of independence and extreme vulnerability. Marie is unusually independent. She has, for instance, lived alone in remote places in the mountains and gone alone on walking holidays but faced with any kind of relationship she feels uncertain and unwanted, longs for intimacy but dreads the consequences of possible rejection or alternatively of being invaded or taken over. Faced with men she wants to hide and thinks they will find her unattractive and unfeminine. And here is the bind she is in: to be attractive she has to be feminine and to be feminine means to be vulnerable, weak, powerless, open to assault and rape. She has split men into two categories: the few men friends she has who are gentle, understanding and the rest of men who are aggressive, macho and devalue women. The split between the father and the uncle (as representing primitive masculinity and manifesting father's unconscious) is obvious here, but also the split in herself between a primitive femininity based on the perception of masculine unconscious on the one hand and her father identification on the other.

I think that the intermediary place which Marie, like her father, inhabits expresses fear of both femininity and masculinity, and also that Marie's fear of violent men has as much to do with uncle's aggression as with father's unconscious phantasy of a beast in himself. Her confusion which stems from inhabiting a kind of intermediary area (not in her object choice which is clearly heterosexual but in her identification with a passive father) finds expression in the phantasy of a monstrous formation inside herself which is invisible to the outsider but which any intimate relationship will reveal. Her fear as well as her longing for an intimate relationship with a man finds expression in her present love for a homosexual man friend. In this ingenious compromise Marie seems to have found a solution. She can love a man who like dad inhabits an intermediary area and who has denounced his interest in women. She feels that homosexual men must be disgusted by women's bodies thus building a very powerful block against the fear of assault and rape.

In the above clinical material I have deliberately left out Marie's relationship to her mother which was fraught with difficulties and was totally unsatisfactory. There is no doubt that had her relationship to her mother been different the outcome of her relationship to her father would have been a different one and the primitive phantasies

about masculinity and femininity might have had less hold on her and would not have led Marie to repress and deny her first identification with her. (It is beyond the scope of this essay to examine mother's unconscious phantasies around masculinity and femininity and her own feelings about her sexuality and her body although these have clearly had a profound influence on Marie.)

A woman, who unlike Marie, has made an identification with a strong, masculine father may become entangled in yet another conflict. She may, now, be strong, decisive, powerful but feels unattractive. If she is heterosexual she may doubt her capacity to be loved by a man. Alternatively she may fear her own capacity to 'emasculate' men through her power and aggression. The Margaret Thatcher phenomenon attracts so much attention because she seems to have, apparently, resolved this conflict. The excessive admiration and hate that she attracts are due - leaving politics aside - to her being an attractive powerful woman 'the only man in the cabinet'. That she made a father identification there is no doubt. In her *Who's Who* entry, for instance, she did not mention her mother at all whereas father was mentioned frequently as the strongest influence of her life, so much so that an article by Nicholas Wapshott (1989) in the *Observer* proclaimed that Britain was ruled not so much by Mrs Thatcher as by Alfred Roberts, her father. In a case like this the woman is completely possessed by the father whose will she carries out. She submits to an undigested, idealised object whose power and glory she claims as he own. I think that the well-known rigidity and inflexibility of many women in authority are due to their having constantly to defend against an unconscious view of femininity as powerlessness. I think that here I am expressing something similar to what Andrew Samuels (1988) called 'gender certainty' although I define it in completely different terms. What I am suggesting here is that a great part of gender identity is taken by powerful phantasies as to what constitutes masculinity and femininity which have their origins in the child's relation to father and mother. What I am also suggesting is that a great part of gender identity has to do with the meaning that masculinity and femininity carry for all the actors involved in the family drama both as individuals and as members of a culture.

What I have not discussed at all in this paper is the absent father and the consequences of his absence on the girl. In the case of the absent father the daughter's phantasy of masculinity will mainly spring from the mother's unconscious. This is probably the most pernicious of the beast/tyrant phantasy completely unmitigated by reality testing, where the idealised and the bad penis replace each other in endless succession and the woman enters a vicious circle of sado-masochistic experiences and relationships. Tereza in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is such a woman. Tereza grew up with a fat, messy, domineering mother away from a weak, pathetic, alcoholic father. Her terrifying phantasies of a male tyrant do not come from her real father. They are primitive imagos buried in the mother's unconscious from her own relationship to her father. Tereza's submissive and docile attitude towards Tomas is a response on the one hand to her persecutory anxiety that such an imago evokes in her, and on the other hand a response to her fear of the 'castrating' woman portrayed in her real mother and to the unbearable anxiety of seeing her father destroyed by her. In this sense the girl's phantasy about masculinity will very much depend on the mother's relation to her own father and on the father imago inside the mother. Whatever this might be, however, the daughter's phantasy of masculinity will have a strong hold on her and will relate to reality in a very tenuous way.

In this paper I have tried to sketch the father's influence on the development of the

girl's sexual identity and on the development of the meaning that maleness and femaleness and masculinity and femininity will have for the girl. I have concentrated on the father's unconscious masculine identity, how it develops and how it affects the developing girl because very little has been written about it and because I think that the development of femininity cannot be adequately explained either by concepts like penis envy or primary femininity or by the relationship to mother only.

Since I have started from the assumption that masculinity and femininity define each other I have proceeded to examine the meaning of masculinity and its relation to femininity. I have not so much solved Freud's riddle as suggested that there is no riddle of femininity apart from a riddle of masculinity, in this way re-introducing a basic dialectic principle that opposites define each other and arise from each other.

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